

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 12MA1**

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☒ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice  
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Ms. Peggy Kemp

Official School Name: Fenway High School

School Mailing Address: 174 Ipswich Street  
Boston, MA 02215-3515

County: Suffolk State School Code Number\*: 00350540

Telephone: (617) 635-9911 E-mail: fenway@boston.k12.ma.us

Fax: (617) 635-9204 Web site/URL: http://www.fenwayhs.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Carol Johnson Superintendent e-mail:  
superintendent@bostonpublicschools.org

District Name: Boston Public Schools District Phone: (617) 635-9000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Reverend Gregory Groover

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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12MA1

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12MA1

All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 78 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
(per district designation): 9 Middle/Junior high schools  
30 High schools  
6 K-12 schools  
123 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 14813

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 9
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	36	48	84
3	0	0	0		10	42	39	81
4	0	0	0		11	38	43	81
5	0	0	0		12	31	40	71
Total in Applying School:								317

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
3 % Asian  
40 % Black or African American  
47 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
8 % White  
2 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 6%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	10
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	8
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	18
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	289
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.06
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 8%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 25

Number of non-English languages represented: 3

Specify non-English languages:

Cape Verdean

Haitian

Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 69%

Total number of students who qualify: 223

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 16%

Total number of students served: 50

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>18</u>	<u>2</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Total number	<u>31</u>	<u>8</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

11:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	94%	95%	94%
High school graduation rate	83%	90%	88%	88%	89%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>61</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>82%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>8%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>2%</u>
Found employment	<u>%</u>
Military service	<u>%</u>
Other	<u>8%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Fenway High School began in 1983 as a small alternative program for disengaged students at a large district high school. Founding faculty believed that all students can learn, whatever their backgrounds and personal attributes. The key was to ensure that school practice fulfilled students' basic educational needs. As the Fenway program developed, a mission statement emerged: to create a socially committed and morally responsible community of learners, which values its students as individuals. Our goal is to encourage academic excellence and the Habits of Mind, self-esteem and leadership development among all the school's students. In everyday practice, the mission became a motto: Work hard. Be yourself. Do the right thing.

In 1995, Fenway became one of Boston's first pilot schools and as such was given control of its own curriculum, staffing, schedule, budget and governance. These autonomies ensured that Fenway could continue to build the innovative programs and community collaborations that were keeping students in school and raising their academic achievement.

For over a decade, Fenway has worked to improve student achievement and reduce the achievement gap among its students by developing programs and strategies to reduce the dropout rate; improve state administered standardized test scores to the point where Fenway students exceed state and district averages for advanced and proficient categories; and increase the college going rate to four-year competitive colleges that offer substantial financial aid.

Fenway's work has garnered numerous awards and recognition. For the past two years U.S. News and World Reports has awarded Fenway a Bronze Medal as one of America's best high schools. Other recognition and awards include:

- Finalist for the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color Award (2012 (Final decision pending);
- The only Boston school district high school designated an exemplary "Compass" School by the Massachusetts. Department of Education (2006-2007);
- One of nine highest-performing, non-selective urban high schools in Massachusetts, Mass INC (2003-2004);
- One of 12 Breakthrough Schools nationwide, National Association of Secondary School Principals (2003-2004).
- One of original ten New American High Schools, U.S. Department of Education;
- Lift-America award, U. S. Department of Labor (1990-1991).

Fenway now has 317 students, in grades 9-12. (Close to 800 applications have been received this year, for 84 freshmen open seats). Students come from neighborhoods across Boston, and represent a broad spectrum of learning styles and accomplishment in previous schools. The racial mix is about 40% black, 47% Hispanic, 8% white, 2.5% Asian 2% other. Over 69% live at or below the poverty level. About 16% have identified learning disabilities. Over 36% come from families who do not speak English as their native language.

Fenway students demonstrate extraordinary performance. In 2008, 2009, and 2010 all seniors graduated, including two cohorts of students with substantial learning disabilities. In 2011, 98% of the senior class graduated. Close to 90% of Fenway's graduates head to college upon graduation and 95% of those to

four-year institutions. The graduates from the class of 2011 were awarded \$900,000 in grants and scholarships. The high graduation rate and college going rate is all the more remarkable considering Fenway's low (2%) drop-out rate and high (90%) four year graduation rate.

Structural decisions, made and reconfirmed over the years, have fostered a learning environment in which every student (and every teacher) is well-known, respected and supported. Fenway's house structure is central. Students are assigned to one of three houses and remain in that house through senior year. Each house has its own faculty. Teachers in the three core content areas – math, science, humanities – typically teach the same cohort of students in grades 9, 10, and 11.

Each house team also includes a student support counselor who serves as a freshmen advisor and keeps an eye on the students in the House, connecting with families and teachers to make sure students stay focused and in school. The student support counselors are also entrusted with maintaining a culture of respect and safety at the school. An underlying premise at Fenway is that students need to feel safe – intellectually, emotionally, and physically – if they are expected to take risks to succeed academically. Providing students with rigorous, intellectual instruction is another key to keeping them engaged and in school. All students have access to the core curriculum -- four years of math, science, humanities and advisory. Additional required courses include Foundations of Literacy for freshmen and sophomores; Spanish; physical education; and Ventures, an entrepreneurship course for juniors and seniors. A deliberate effort is made to connect students to the broader community so that they are introduced to adult role models and mentors, career options and higher education opportunities.



### 1. Assessment Results:

A. Fenway participates in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). These standardized tests in Math and ELA are given in the 10th grade and schools may select administering the science test (physics, biology, chemistry or technology) for students to take in either the 9th or 10th grade. Fenway has opted to test 9th graders in physics, our required science course for all 9th graders. MCAS has four levels of performance, Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning/Failing. Advanced and/or Proficient are considered to be acceptable for Fenway students. Those who are categorized as needing improvement must successfully complete courses in their junior and senior years that address the skills tested in the MCAS exam which they scored a Needs Improvement. If students fail the MCAS exam, they must retake the exam until they score Needs Improvement or better in order to graduate. Successful course completion and retaking the exam to score Needs Improvement is required of all students scoring failing. Fenway has made substantial progress in reducing the number of students failing in all three exam areas with math having no failures for the past two years and ELA having no failures in the past three years. In science there were no failures in two of the past four years.

In addition to standardized assessments, students are expected to show mastery of the material in each of their classes through exhibitions, portfolios, graded seminars, and research papers as well as class-based tests and quizzes. These assessments judge performance at levels well above those on the MCAS exams. For the small number of students who do not reach proficiency on the MCAS exams, they continue a rigorous course of study that exceeds the MCAS standards for their remaining two years at Fenway, graduate and matriculate to institutions of higher education. No student has failed to graduate from Fenway nor been transferred elsewhere for failing MCAS.

B. Students' performance on MCAS are carefully analyzed each year and that data is studied by content teams and informs changes in curriculum and instruction during the following year. The performance trends in the ELA MCAS scores over the past five years show consistent improvement with a gain of 28 points from 2007 to 2011 for students scoring advanced/proficient. In 2010, there was a dip in the ELA advanced/proficient score. The analysis of the testing data for that year revealed that students had difficulty reading and analyzing non-fictional texts. The Foundations of Literacy course given to all freshmen and sophomores and the Humanities courses subsequently ensured that students had a broader experience in reading and analyzing these types of texts.

In 2007, ELA MCAS analysis revealed that Latino students were not performing as well as African Americans or others at the school in the ELA MCAS exam. As a result, the school undertook an analysis of student performance by skill level and shared that information with members of the Humanities team with an increased focus on awareness of subgroup discrepancies in performance. Since then there have been insignificant fluctuations of performance levels between subgroups and there has not been a significant gap among the groups or between the groups and achievement levels as a whole. Fenway's efforts to narrow the achievement gap between Latino students and other subgroups led to the finding by the Mauricio Gaston Institute of UMass Boston in 2008 that Fenway was one of two Boston high schools where Latino students succeed.

In math, the advanced/proficient MCAS scores over the past five years have been improving steadily. These improvements are the result of the work that the math team has done in analyzing the MCAS exam, ensuring that the skills on the exam are being taught in class and re-sequencing the curriculum so that students are equipped with the knowledge and skill sets they need before the exams which are given in the spring. The work of the math team led to a curriculum review process resulting in the adoption of a new text and curriculum in 2009 that is designed to better meet the needs of students matriculating to college.

In the latest year tested, there is less than a 10% achievement gap between the test scores of all students and any subgroup in ELA and math.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

Fenway has studied the results of the MCAS exams for many years and used that data to inform faculty of student strengths and gaps in skill sets and knowledge. Prior to 2011, principal interns (men and women working on graduate degrees in educational leadership), under the supervision of the Head of School, performed the data analysis. In 2011, Fenway obtained the services of an Americorps VISTA to develop a systematic way to gather and study student and school performance data and create a system to incorporate the analysis into the normal functions of the school. The VISTA, who began in September 2011 started by looking at student MCAS scores. He looked at each question and the categories of questions on the ELA and Math MCAS and determined how many students responded either correctly or incorrectly. He further looked into the incorrect scores to determine if the response was a guess, a misunderstanding of the question or if the student did not understand the subject matter tested. These analyses were presented to the Humanities and Math teams during their regular weekly meetings. (Each content team meets for 1 ½ hours every week.)

The VISTA then turned his attention to a similar analysis of students' PSAT scores and the SAT scores for the past few years. Again, he looked at the types of questions that were answered erroneously and why and reported his findings to the faculty at large as well as to specific content team faculty who will incorporate these findings into their summer curriculum planning for next year's courses.

Further examination by the VISTA will include an analysis of the National Clearinghouse data that tracks where students matriculate to college and when they graduate. During a second phase of the graduate study he will conduct a survey of recent graduates to find out whether they felt well-prepared by Fenway or what Fenway could have done to better prepare them.

As part of the effort to create a sustainable system of data collection and analysis, there is now a "data team" at Fenway whose job it is to review the work of the VISTA and incorporate the findings into curriculum planning and instruction sequencing in relevant content teams and to inform the teaching and learning committee for the creation of appropriate and responsive professional development. Although Fenway teachers do not "teach to the test," there is broad recognition that students' achievement on standardized tests are necessary for their future success. Math and humanities faculty have altered their curricula and looked at the sequencing of skills taught throughout the year to maximize performance results for students. In math the data analysis resulted in the adoption of an entire new curriculum to target algebra, geometry and calculus, mirroring the ways in which math problems are set out in the MCAS, PSATs and SATs. On ELA tests students demonstrated difficulty reading and analyzing non-fictional texts and demonstrated limited knowledge of vocabulary. These issues were directly addressed through the introduction of more non-fictional reading and a focused effort on vocabulary development into the Foundations of Literacy and Humanities curriculum.

The data is shared with families at parent night in the fall when a review of 10th grade MCAS scores is discussed. In addition, the importance of the SAT's and the availability of SAT prep classes that are offered at the school and elsewhere are emphasized to junior and senior parents at the parent night as well.

The MCAS data is made readily available by the Boston Public Schools and the Massachusetts Department of Education and is frequently referenced by school administrators. Fenway's annual report includes a summary of MCAS data, together with graduation, drop-out and transfer rates. The publicized data provides important indicators to parents considering new schools at school recruiting fairs. The fact that Fenway consistently receives over 500 applications for its freshman class of 75-80 students (and this year received over 800 applications for 84 freshmen seats) is an indication that the school is highly regarded and valued by parents across the city.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Fenway shares widely its practices and successful strategies with schools and districts across the country and around the world. Fenway has opened itself to research studies by academic and philanthropic organizations, has participated in a national school reform organization, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and has an active visitors program. Fenway humanities faculty introduced humanities curricula to Boston high schools by providing materials, coaching and residencies to teachers and administrators. Fenway's work with special needs students was shared with more than 25 Boston educators during a one-day workshop and through a summer institute for local and national educators.

Fenway's math program was one of three schools nationally profiled in the 2008 WestEd study by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, *Rethinking High Schools: Supporting all Students to be College Ready in Math*. In 2008 Fenway's work with Latino students was cited as one of two high schools in Boston that successfully educate Latino students. (If they fail, we fail; If they succeed, we succeed: Case studies of Boston Schools where Latino Students Succeed, Maurizio Gaston Institute, 2008). In 2007-2008, Fenway was one of 38 schools asked to participate in a study, *Redefining College Readiness*, sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Fenway's membership in the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), which it joined in 1989, provided many opportunities for Fenway to share its model and practices. Fenway served as a mentor school, hosted two national institutes, and attended and presented workshops at the Fall Forum. Presentation topics included the Ventures program; humanities portfolio; special education and student advocacy. Fenway has had an active visitors program. Visitors come seeking a variety of strategies, school structures, and to observe Fenway's culture, curriculum, assessment practices and advisories. Recent visits have included the Washington DC School District; a group from Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE); educators from Central Falls, Rhode Island and from Miami/Dade and Duval counties, Florida; as well as a group from New Orleans sponsored by Leading Educators. In 2010-2011, Fenway partnered with the Center for Secondary School Design and the New England Network for Personalization and Performance for educators to visit Fenway. A typical visitor day begins with an overview of the school, its practices and design. Classroom observations, discussions with teachers and lunch with students are followed by a debriefing session with the Head and Associate Head of School.

### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

Much of Fenway's success with its students is derived from the strong community purposely built with families, students and staff. As a small school Fenway wants its students and their families to understand and "buy in" to the culture and the community's high expectations. Fenway's motto: "Work hard. Be Yourself. Do the Right Thing." highlights Fenway's expectations of students, families and itself. Each spring newly admitted students and families are invited to the school to gain an understanding of what Fenway is about. This first orientation is followed by a second round where students and families can ask questions and meet faculty and staff. Admitted students and their families are invited to a Welcome Parent dinner in May hosted by current parents. Families gather by House groups where they meet the teachers and House coordinators of each house and learn about the House traditions and expectations.

Throughout the year families form an integral part of the life of the school. There is a parent council that meets five times a year with the Head of School and parents serve on the school's governing board. Special programs for parents include a college night for juniors and senior parents and a night for senior parents to learn about the FASFA and other financial aid information for colleges.

The teachers from each grade meet annually with parents during parent narrative conferences. These conferences, preceded by a written narrative of a student's progress, last from 20 to 30 minutes during which time parents meet with each of his/her child's teachers and advisors. There is also a parent newsletter that goes out each marking term with information from the Head of School and includes information about upcoming events and announcements.

Fenway hosts an evening class for parents called Tech Goes Home. This six week class, taught by a Fenway teacher and administrator, features students and parents working together to learn about computers and basic software.

Two years ago parents volunteered on weekends and during a school vacation to paint the hallways at Fenway. They worked alongside the Associate Head of School and teachers who also volunteered their time to improve the look of the school.

### 1. Curriculum:

Fenway strives to engage all of its students in a rigorous academic program that prepares them for higher education and citizenship. Fenway's mission states as a goal "to encourage academic excellence and the habits of mind, self-esteem and leadership development among all the school's students." Thirty years ago a high school diploma was a ticket to leadership. But today's high school graduates need at least a bachelor's degree or solid job credentials to find productive, sustaining work and rise to positions of power and influence as full participants in their communities.

In order that Fenway's students have access to the full curriculum, emphasis is placed on inclusion, supported by a layered system that promotes disciplined inquiry, time for in depth reflection, and pedagogy that allows for multiple points of entry during a class. The school's multiple assessment practices also are designed to give all learners an opportunity to ask questions and demonstrate knowledge through written work, portfolios, graded seminars and exhibitions.

Every Fenway student takes four years of math, science and humanities, an integrated course covering English, history, social studies, civics and geography. In addition to these three core courses, Fenway freshmen and sophomores are required to take an intensive English language arts class, Foundations of Literacy. Students take three semesters of Spanish, two years of physical education and four years of advisory.

An entrepreneurship class, Ventures, is required for juniors and seniors. During the junior year, students work in groups to create a business plan for a business or service they would like to see in their communities. These business plans are developed with mentors from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and are then presented at "The Pitch" to a panel of judges –some whom may be venture capitalists, but others who are business people, attorneys, or bankers. This course develops 21st century learning skills such as working collaboratively, using technology, creating financial plans, and making effective presentations. In senior-year Ventures, all students are required to successfully complete a six-week, 30 hour/week, unpaid internship.

Sophomores take arts electives during their advisory for two terms. The arts electives have been offered for the past three years and are funded from private sources, which means that their continuation cannot be guaranteed. Fenway works with multiple community arts organizations to provide instruction. These electives include design, African drumming, visual arts, Latino dance, culinary arts, media arts and theater. The elective model proved so successful that academically themed electives were introduced this year and incorporated into junior and senior advisories for two terms as well. The junior/senior electives include: a psychology course; Web-design; Civil Disobedience; Current Events; SolidWorks: 3D design and Social Justice in Film.

Fenway's community partnerships expand the curricular offerings at the school. Since 2005, over 200 students have taken close to 300 courses at Emmanuel College, a local liberal arts college, for dual enrollment credit. Fenway's partnership with the Museum of Science has led to a decades-old practice where sophomores in one house spend a day at the museum, taking classes and serving as docents. This opportunity develops our students' interpersonal and leadership skills and, over the years, has led to summer jobs and internships at the museum.

Each spring, shortly after the seniors have left on their internships, students and faculty at Fenway participate in Project Week. This is an old tradition at Fenway and solidifies the connections between the school and the "city as a classroom." In groups of approximately 15 students and two or three faculty, a topic of common interest is explored in depth. Many groups stay in Boston but others hike the Berkshires, participate in an exchange with a rural school in Maine or go abroad.

## **2. Reading/English:**

English language arts (ELA) instruction takes place in two separate classes: humanities, which all students take in grades nine through twelve, and Foundations of Literacy, a required class of students in grades nine and ten. In humanities, ELA is integrated into a historical context. While humanities is a multidisciplinary class, the primary focus of Foundations of Literacy is the development of ELA and reading skills. This curriculum includes explicit instruction in the processes of reading so students practice metacognition while they read. Strategies taught to students in Foundations of Literacy are reiterated in the humanities curriculum. Both classes rely on the same methods of writing instruction, and teachers share outlines and rubrics for expository writing.

In both humanities and Foundations of Literacy, reading instruction is based on a model of before, during and after reading activities to scaffold text comprehension. Before a text is read, teachers build students' background knowledge to set the context of the reading and establish purpose. This may include understanding Greek mythology prior to reading *The Odyssey* or reviewing relevant vocabulary. Students learn to develop their own questions before they begin reading a text. While reading a text, students "mark it up" as a means of monitoring their comprehension and engaging in a conversation with the author. Some teachers ask students to use check marks and question marks to indicate their understanding. Others teach students how to determine what information is important and highlight and/or take notes. Teachers often format a reading so it includes space for students to annotate the text as they read. Most teachers use reading guides on a regular basis. Reading guides might include a road map to the text with periodic questions or definitions of words to aid students in their comprehension. Fenway teachers use a wide range of after-reading activities that include writing, speaking, presenting, illustrating, and dramatizing. The range of activities provides students with multiple ways to demonstrate what they understand. All teachers regularly use graded seminars and allow students to earn points for their text-based discussions. Students generally lead these seminars while the teacher acts as more like a moderator.

The reading program as introduced to ninth graders in Foundations of Literacy and carried out in humanities in grades nine through twelve, enables all students to hone their reading skills. In addition, teachers use alternative texts, including assistive technology, to further provide struggling students with access to texts

## **3. Mathematics:**

All students are required to pass four years of math to graduate from Fenway. Adopted three years ago, the math team uses the Center for Mathematics Education (CME) Project for grades 9-12. The CME Project is organized according to the traditional sequence of Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and pre-calculus. CME blends progressive learning styles so that students can learn both math skills and critical thinking skills. An advantage of the CME curriculum is that it gives teachers the opportunity to use familiar mathematical themes to create a problem-based, real-world and student-centered program. The curriculum structure allows teachers to develop lesson plans that are not only rigorous and challenging for advanced students but that will engage students of all abilities, preparing them for higher achievement in mathematics. The CME Project curriculum leads students to a deep understanding of mathematics. A range of assessments tools are used in math instruction. Students are given tests, quizzes, mid- and final exams but are also asked to demonstrate their knowledge through exhibitions and portfolios. In the 10th and 11th grades, each student is required to present at one major class-based exhibition each year. External judges, other faculty members and parents are invited to observe student work and provide feedback to the student. In addition, all students are required to produce several portfolios during the course of the year. Seniors are required to complete projects rather than portfolios. The math team regularly reviews MCAS performance to ensure that students are prepared to successfully complete this graduation requirement.

In senior year some students have the option of taking pre-calculus at Emmanuel College, a small liberal arts college in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston. Other students take pre-calculus or statistics at Fenway. In order to facilitate the transition to college, the senior courses are taught in a style that reflects

what students will encounter in a college setting. For example, in senior classes teachers lecture more than in their other classes, help students learn note-taking techniques and weigh exams more heavily than homework.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Humanities is a defining feature of Fenway High School, and an outgrowth of the mission. Students are asked to combine the commonly distinct fields of social sciences and literature to have a deeper understanding of not only history but also the issues and circumstances they face today.

The humanities curriculum uses a four-year cycle based on a series of essential questions. All students in the school, ninth through twelfth grade, simultaneously study the same essential question creating a school culture in which all students are engaged in the same material regardless of house or grade. These essential questions form the framework for developing reading, writing and research skills. In a culminating project in senior year, students are required to produce a position paper and a research paper on a topic of their own choosing (with guidance from the senior humanities teacher).

The question, “How do we govern ourselves?” coincides with the presidential election every four years. During this year, students are pushed to evaluate the meaning of leadership, to question their role as citizens, and to examine the role of government.

The essential question, “Who built America?” investigates the contributions various groups of people have made in the development of the nation. This curriculum explores the contributions made by various peoples and seeks to instill in students a willingness to explore their own history and respect for the history of others.

Another question, “How does one do right in the face of injustice?” emanates directly from Fenway’s social justice mission. During this year, the humanities team collaborates with its longstanding partner, Facing History and Ourselves, an organization that began with a focus on Holocaust education but has since expanded to create resources on topics as wide ranging as the Armenian genocide and the current bullying crisis in schools. Students develop both an academic understanding of pivotal moments in history and learn to identify those moments as they arise.

In the fourth year, students study the question, “What does it mean to be human?” During this year, fundamental aspects of human nature are explored through a multiplicity of disciplines-- evolutionary biology, philosophy, world religion, psychology and sociology. Students are frequently challenged to reflect on who they are as a member of the human race, as a participant in culture, as a believer (or not) in a religion, as a member of a family, and as a philosopher with a personal code of belief.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

Fenway’s belief in the strength and mutual benefit of heterogeneous classrooms means that its faculty is prepared to deliver differentiated instruction in every content area. Students come to Fenway from Boston middle schools with a wide range of learning styles, skill levels and bases of knowledge. Fenway’s instructional practices emanate from the Coalition of Essential Schools’ ten common principles that are designed to give students ownership and mastery over their own learning, leading to the overarching practice of “student as worker; teacher as coach.” Content is occasionally delivered from the front of the class, but most class periods involve active learning by students through group work, graded seminars, and use of real-world applications.

Fenway’s collaborations with Tufts University School of Education and the Boston Teacher Residency program place 12 to 15 master-degree student interns full time in classrooms throughout the year. That means that almost every classroom has two full-time teachers who can help deliver differentiated instruction throughout each class as needed.

Fenway's personalized approach uses each student's learning profile to build a curriculum that can meet both the goals and outcomes of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as well as the general education curriculum within each department. Teachers target the most important content and skills students need to successfully master class content and transition to future classes.

The practice of differentiated instruction was honed through professional development focused on students with substantial learning disabilities. Among the many lessons learned was that skill instruction and development is equally as important as content; that reading and writing skills should be explicitly taught and not assumed; and that students need to understand their learning styles and disabilities so they can advocate for themselves to access content and do the work expected of them.

Fenway's use of multiple assessments such as portfolios, exhibitions, graded seminars, as well as papers, tests and exams honor students' differentiated learning styles and give students opportunities to show what they know in a variety of ways.

Fenway has two computer labs and two mobile labs that are used for whole-class projects and instruction. Technology at Fenway is a tool for learning, not a subject matter of learning in itself. The computer labs are open and available for student use before and after school, and there are one or two computers in every classroom and more in the library. The learning center, for students with special needs, is equipped with computers that have assistive technology software.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Professional development at Fenway is driven by particular areas of need as they arise and become identified by teachers in their classroom practice, by assessment results or by external trends and influences. Faculty meet as a whole for six days throughout the year. In addition, faculty meet in content teams every week for an hour and a half to review curriculum, sequencing, assessment results and needed resources. Content teams also meet during the summer for three days to plan the next year's curriculum. Additional professional development sessions occur as needed five or six times during the year. A significant amount of professional development takes place during weekly department meetings when faculty can bring questions and share best practices. Fenway has a literacy coordinator - an important resource to teachers in all departments - who can address questions regarding literacy in all disciplines. The Teaching and Learning Committee is comprised of teachers and administrators who look at professional development needs and devise a plan for the year. During one year, professional development focused on how to improve the achievement levels of males of color. Two years ago, a nationally known psychologist and educator, Dr. Michael Thompson, spoke to the faculty about how boys learn, what supports they need and how to devise teaching strategies to keep them engaged.

Several years ago, Fenway undertook a yearlong professional development effort in partnership with a teacher from The Landmark School, an independent school specializing in language-based learning disabilities, the category of special needs student assigned to Fenway from the district. During that year faculty met for two day-long workshops and were able to attend monthly lunches where teachers could consult with one another and with the Landmark teacher about issues arising in their classrooms. The thrust of this focused professional development effort was to prepare teachers in every classroom on differentiated instruction as the goal was to promote the special needs students into supportive mainstream classrooms as soon as they were ready. The fruits of this work can still be felt in today's classrooms.

This year, the professional development focus is on analyzing data from MCAS, PSAT and SAT scores. That data is being shared widely with the faculty, with the board of trustees and parents and with individual content teams.



## **7. School Leadership:**

Leadership is widely shared and distributed at Fenway, and there are numerous ways in which the administration, faculty and students communicate with each other to form a transparency of information exchange and a sense of ownership among all stakeholders at the school. The Head of School acts as more of a facilitator than a “top down” leader.

As a pilot school in Boston, Fenway High School has a Board of Trustees that hires and evaluates the head of school and advocates for the school as needed. The Board is comprised of community members, many of whom work at Fenway’s partner institutions such as Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Emmanuel College, the Museum of Science and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; parents, faculty, a student and administrators.

Fenway’s administrative leadership is comprised of a Head of School and an Associate Head of School who work collaboratively with faculty, students and parents. Faculty exercise leadership in multiple ways. The three house coordinators and senior house coordinator are all teachers. The Lead Team, which reviews whole-school policies and schedules, includes the house coordinators, Head of the School, Associate Head of School, a student support counselor, the Director of Development and the school librarian. The Teaching and Learning Team looks at school academic practices and instructional strategies and develops professional development programs for the faculty. Many decisions that are closely related to students are made by the houses – groups of teachers, one from each discipline and a student support counselor, who meet every Tuesday for an hour and a half after a full staff meeting. Decisions regarding curriculum are made by the department team teachers who teach in the same discipline across all grades in consultation with administration. Fenway’s student support counselors and special education coordinator meet with administration once a week to discuss specific students and issues of school climate.

Fenway’s strategic planning effort in 2006 is illustrative of the leadership style at the school. The process included three “big tent” meetings of close to 100 stakeholders – current teachers, students, families, alumni, alumni parents, city officials, school department personnel, board members and donors. Fenway’s five-year strategic plan came out of those meetings and the goals and objectives of the plan guided major decisions and policies. Fenway is committed to a process of shared leadership and decision making that insures that all stakeholders feel a sense of ownership and accountability.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 10 Test: MCAS Math

Edition/Publication Year: n/a Publisher: Measured Progress

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced or higher	84	81	84	72	70
Advanced	41	40	39	32	30
Number of students tested	70	68	69	73	70
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced or higher	86	82	85	66	75
Advanced	42	44	34	29	30
Number of students tested	48	48	41	49	40
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Advanced or higher	77	77	73	67	80
Advanced	30	42	23	30	28
Number of students tested	30	31	22	30	29
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Advanced or higher	90	82	89	69	57
Advanced	48	34	50	25	19
Number of students tested	31	29	36	32	26
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Advanced or higher	0	82	0	27	64
Advanced	0	27	0	9	21
Number of students tested		12		11	15
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Advanced or higher	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Advanced or higher					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Performance data not collected for subgroups smaller than 10.					

12MA1

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10 Test: MCAS ELA

Edition/Publication Year: n/a Publisher: Measured Progress

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient or higher 59	95	75	93	79	67
Advanced 4	13	6	13	10	7
Number of students tested	72	70	71	72	72
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	94	73	93	73	60
Advanced	8	6	15	6	5
Number of students tested	50	49	41	49	42
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	90	69	100	79	70
Advanced	13	3	13	7	3
Number of students tested	30	32	23	29	30
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	97	79	92	81	60
Advanced	9	7	11	9	4
Number of students tested	33	29	37	32	27
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	42	0	73	40
Advanced	0	0	0	0	7
Number of students tested		12		11	15
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient or higher					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Performance levels are not calculated for subgroups of fewer than 10 students.					

12MA1

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient or higher <b>56</b>	84	81	84	72	70
Advanced <b>29</b>	41	40	39	32	30
Number of students tested	70	68	69	73	70
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	86	82	85	66	75
Advanced	42	44	34	29	30
Number of students tested	48	48	41	49	40
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	77	77	73	67	80
Advanced	30	42	23	30	28
Number of students tested	30	31	22	30	29
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	90	82	89	69	57
Advanced	48	34	50	25	19
Number of students tested	31	29	36	32	26
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	82	0	27	64
Advanced	0	27	0	9	21
Number of students tested	0	12	0	11	15
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12MA1

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient or higher	95	75	93	79	67
Advanced	13	6	13	10	7
Number of students tested	72	70	71	72	72
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
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Advanced	9	7	11	9	4
Number of students tested	33	29	37	32	27
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	42	0	73	40
Advanced	0	0	0	0	7
Number of students tested	0	12	0	11	15
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient or higher	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12MA1